

Att afrikanisera vetenskaplig kunskap

MIM och malariaforskningen i postkolonialt
dilemma

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Abstract

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The goal of this thesis is to analyse the concept of Africanisation in relation to the efforts of the international research alliance The Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM), which since 1997 has promoted research on malaria and worked to strengthen research environments in Africa. When applied to academic knowledge production the concept of Africanisation entails two integrated themes: (1) the meaning of locality to researchers' ability to represent a study object correctly and with relevance, and (2) the impact of continuing colonial logics on scientific knowledge production (in terms of epistemology and organisation of research). The thesis shows what the concept of Africanisation means in the case of MIM, and demonstrates its complexity – the many material, social and political factors that it embraces and processes.

Theoretical and methodological points of departure are Actor Network Theory (ANT), and such feminist and post-colonial perspectives that analyse colonialism's influence on knowledge production and the researcher's ability to authentically represent a study object. The thesis presents MIM's historical development (1995–2005): it shows the situation that led to the launch of MIM, what was thought to be achieved, actors' negotiations over MIM's focus and how ideas then materialised. It includes an in-depth study of one of MIM's Pan-African conferences, where it is illustrated how actors negotiate about what justifies research, about what gives scientific knowledge its value and what the relationship between science and other societal institutions should look like. It discusses the meaning of the researcher's different localities, and presents examples of the sort of scientific facts that the Africanisation of malaria research is claimed to result in.

The study of MIM shows that the Africanisation of malaria research implies that scientific knowledge production should not be imagined as an autonomous activity, but instead be formulated in cooperation with all the actors affected by scientific work – mainly those who produce knowledge and those who are affected by the disease and the socio-political consequences of the disease. It implies that social and political effects of different support activities should be evaluated in order to avoid the reproduction of colonial orders.

Keywords: The Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM), malaria research, research capacity strengthening, situated knowledge, localities of malaria research, Actor Network Theory, Postcolonial Theory, Feminist Studies of Science